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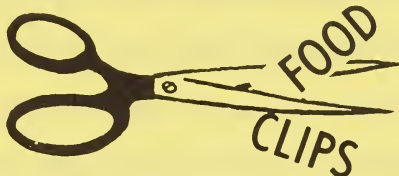




# Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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Preparing fresh Brussels sprouts and broccoli? Soak in cold salt water for a short time to remove any insects.

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Cover potatoes with water to prevent darkening—if held after paring. Do not soak most vegetables a long time however, because some nutrients dissolve in the water.

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Some vegetables, especially tomatoes, develop an unpleasant, but harmless, metallic taste from a chemical reaction of the food to lining of a can, once it's open.

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Store dried vegetables in tightly closed containers in a cool dry place. Most dried vegetables will keep several months.

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Thin white sauce is usually preferred with starchy vegetables like peas or lima beans; medium white sauce, with other vegetables.

## LO, THE GYPSY MOTH

The leaf-eating gypsy moth caterpillars are still a problem to homeowners. But there are ways that you can protect your trees and ornamental shrubs if you follow the directions by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

1. A wide band of creosote or a sticky substance called "tangle foot" should be put around tree trunks (to trap the caterpillars).
2. Tie burlap or cloth strips around trees (caterpillars cluster under the strips and can be easily destroyed).
3. Hand pick or squash any larvae, caterpillars, or pupae found in the trees.

Did you know that gypsy moths can strip acres of trees in a matter of days? One defoliation can kill evergreen trees. About 1.7 million acres of woodland were defoliated by gypsy moths in 1973.

## ALMOST ALL ABOUT —

"Without onions there would be no gastronomic art," said one 19th century writer. "Banish it from the kitchen and all pleasure of eating flies with it. Onion's presence lends color and enchantment to the most modest dish; its absence reduces the rarest dainty to hopeless insipidity, and the diner to despair." And -- so goes the stories about onions, the sometimes pungent bulb that is often used as a main vegetable or as a flavoring ingredient to main meal dishes.

References were made to onions, long before man had written languages, in tales passed down from generation to generation. One such tale is that when Satan stepped out of the Garden of Eden, after he had done his dirty work there, onions sprang up from the spot where he placed his right foot, and garlic from the spot his left foot touched. If that is so, he did a "devil of a favor" for mankind.

Onions were a staple food for workers who built the pyramids. Ancient Egyptians are said to have taken their oath with their right hand on an onion, indicating it was a symbol of eternity because of its sphere within a sphere formation. Egyptian paintings frequently show a priest holding onions in his hand or covering an altar with a bundle of onion leaves and roots. Later, onions are mentioned in the Bible as one of the foods that the Israelites longed for in the Wilderness, and they so informed Moses.

But -- the onion was introduced to the New World by the Spanish who brought onions to the West Indies soon after their discovery. From there, onions soon spread to all parts of the Americas. Onions were grown and enjoyed by the earliest colonists and later were adopted by the American Indians.



## —Onions, Lore and Legend

"onion — a widely cultivated plant of the lily family" - -

Onions have also been used as medicine down through the ages, too, with a classic example of this during our Civil War period. General Grant believed firmly that onions were important as a remedy for dysentery and other ills of hot climates. According to legend, during the summer campaign of 1864, General Grant wired the War Department: "I will not move my Army without onions." The very next day, three trainloads were started to the front.

Summertime -- barbecue time -- finds the lovely aroma of onion and hamburgers or steak over a charcoal broiler on a summer evening. The list of how to use them is endless, ranging from onion pie to shish kebob.

Last year, 1973, we saw an onion shortage due to unseasonable weather -- tropical storms and crop damage. It was the greatest shortage in fifty years -- and a real problem for many cooks because the American consumer likes onions. Statistically, the 210 million consumers utilize 13 pounds per capita consumption.

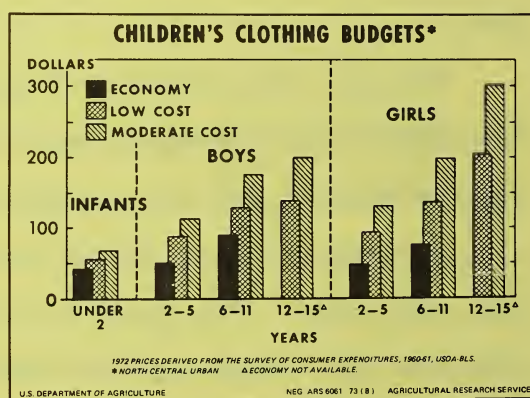
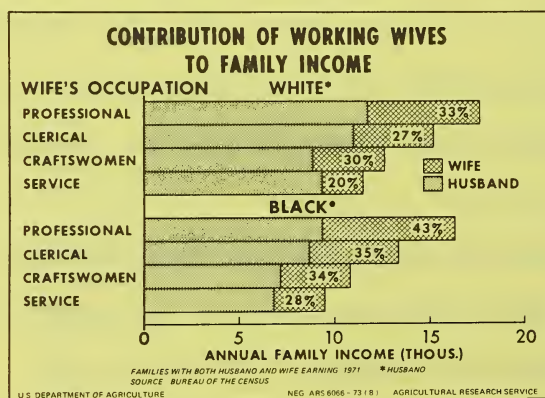
This year the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture sees no shortage ahead for onions -- the market is good now, plenty are available and they are reasonable.

In buying onions you should look for hard or firm onions which are dry and have small necks. They should be covered with papery outer scales and reasonably free from sunburn spots and other blemishes. Remember, size has nothing to do with quality. Onions are low in calories -- a raw one about 2½ inches in diameter provides only about 40 calories and does include nutritional values in potassium, phosphorus, sodium, and ascorbic acid.

## CHARTS -- and More Charts

If you're interested in graphically showing the Contribution of Working Wives to Family Income -- or the cost of Children's Clothing Budgets -- or a number of other trends in Agricultural and related subjects -- the 1973 Handbook of Agricultural Charts includes a complete series. Charts on the family, ranging from diet sources of protein to medical care prices and food costs, are available in the handbook. It provides visuals for news stories, or for publication reprints, and the slides are useful to present at workshops.

Five areas are covered by the charts -- with individual slides available on the Domestic Agricultural Situation, Foreign Production and Trade, Population and Rural Development and Commodity Trends. The slides are cardboard mounted for use in any standard projector. They may be ordered from the Photography Division, Office of Communication, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Send for a price list, or purchase the Agriculture Handbook #455 from the U.S. Government Printing Office for \$1.55.

**NOTE:**

Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535-A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.